

# The Sunday-school Movement in Scotland, 1780-1914<sup>1</sup>

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This year the Sunday-school movement is celebrating the bicentenary of its foundation. Although the movement is not as numerically significant as it once was, the institutional and social history of the Sunday school in England has been the subject of renewed interest among historians.<sup>2</sup> Sadly, its history in Scotland has not received the same attention. In part, this may be due to greater academic and popular interest in the denominational dimension of recent Scottish religious history. Yet, the Sunday school was an institution that attained a parallel significance in Scotland and England. It played an important rôle in the development of day-school and voluntary education, and was the largest single youth movement ever seen in this country. More than any other religious organisation, it displayed the strength and vigour of Victorian evangelicalism. Politically, the movement became one of the largest pressure groups in nineteenth-century Scotland. This paper is intended to provide a brief introductory survey of the history of the Sunday-school movement in Scotland from its formative years in the late eighteenth century to its heyday in the period before the First World War.

In 1780 or 1781, Robert Raikes gathered some neglected children from the streets of Gloucester and set them to work on religious exercises in Sunday classes. During the following decade, Raikes popularised the Sunday school as a means for improving the moral, educational and religious standards of children of the "lower orders". The Sunday-school movement in Scotland owes its initial growth to the example Raikes set and broadcast in his own newspaper and in other journals. The provision of education on Sundays, however, was not new in the 1780s. John Wesley experimented with some form of Sunday school in 1737, and Methodists in various parts of England were conducting Sunday classes in the 1760s and 1770s. At least two Church of Scotland ministers established Sunday evening schools for destitute children before Raikes: in Brechin in 1761 and at Calton in the Barony

1 The research on which this paper is based was carried out with the assistance of a graduate studentship from the Social Science Research Council.

2 See for example J. K. Meir, "The Origin and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England from 1780 to 1880, in Relation to the State Provision of Education" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1954); and T. W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working-class Culture 1780-1850* (New Haven and London, 1976).

parish near Glasgow in 1774 or 1775.<sup>3</sup> There was some inter-congregational competition in the second half of the nineteenth century in claiming the earliest-known Sunday schools, and there may be other claimants. The provision of education on Sundays, however, was quite widespread in eighteenth-century Scotland. Many presbyterian ministers conducted communicants' classes for training those about to enter into full communion with their churches. Furthermore, it was the duty of parish schoolmasters in many parts of the country to assemble their classes on Sunday mornings and lead them in prayer before conducting them to church. In some instances, pupils were given religious lessons after Sunday worship.<sup>4</sup> Thus, there were precedents for Sunday education, although there is no evidence to suggest that there were any direct precursors of the Sunday school.

The Sunday-school movement *qua* movement emerged in Scotland in 1787. The exact way in which it was introduced to Scotland is unclear. As in England, the press seems to have played an important part in disseminating information on Sunday-school aims, organisation and curricula. The January edition of the *Scots Magazine* in 1787 reproduced a letter from Robert Raikes to the London Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools in which he described the operation of Sunday schools in Painswick in Gloucestershire. The February edition of the journal reported the opening of a Sunday school in Aberdeen, whilst a pamphleteer urged the foundation of Sunday schools in Glasgow.<sup>5</sup> The first major Sunday-school operation in Scotland started in Glasgow in November 1787. The town council, in co-operation with the general session and private citizens, set up eight schools to instruct over 400 boys. Within two years, the project had almost doubled in size and girls were admitted. In the same month as the commencement of the Glasgow scheme, Sunday schools were being set up in Aberdeen and in the Barony of Glasgow.<sup>6</sup> By the early 1790s, Sunday schools had been established in many parts of the Scottish lowlands.

These early Sunday schools had two functions. In the first place, they were designed to provide basic educational training for

3 Meir, "Origin and Development", 23-6; *Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1876: Report on Sabbath Schools*, 522; J. Maclehose (publisher), *The Old Country Houses of the Old Glasgow Gentry* (Glasgow, 1878), 219-220.

4 R. D. Brackenridge, "Sunday Observance in Scotland 1689-1900" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 1962), 62-3.

5 *Scots Magazine*, January 1787, 15-17; February 1787, 99; Brackenridge, "Sunday Observance", 108.

6 *Scots Magazine*, December 1787, 619; *Glasgow Advertiser*, 28 December 1789; R. Renwick (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow . . .* (Glasgow, 1913), viii, 237, 241, 286, 388-90.

children who received no schooling on weekdays. Consequently, the first Sunday-school scholars were either employed in workshops or textile factories or were children of parents who could not afford to pay day-school fees. Glasgow town council became involved in the Sunday-school movement after the general session had conducted an inquiry into the extent of educational provision in the city. Royal burghs were not statutorily required to establish parish schools, and Glasgow, like most burghs, was gravely short of day-school places for children of the working classes and the poor. As a result of the inquiry in Glasgow in 1785, the city's civil and ecclesiastical authorities created extra charity day-schools in an attempt to meet "the considerable want of education arising from the poverty of parents".<sup>7</sup>

This solution was not workable because the majority of the children who were educationally destitute were employed in the new manufacturing industries of the 1780s. Sunday schools provided the solution by permitting these so-called "apprentices" to receive education on their only day of rest. The curricula of the early Sunday schools reflected the concern for general as well as religious education. The first Sunday school in Aberdeen was established "for the instruction of poor children, in reading English, learning the principles of the Christian religion, and psalmody".<sup>8</sup> The Sunday schools set up between 1787 and 1796 employed professional teachers who were paid salaries. By 1795, Glasgow had 12 Sunday-school teachers each paid an annual salary of £4 6s. 8d. from triennial collections in the Established churches managed by the town council.<sup>9</sup>

In part, the use of professional teachers reflected the concern to maintain presbyterial supervision of an expanding teaching profession. More importantly, it indicated the status of Sunday schools in the context of the educational system. The Scottish clergy, in common with local authorities in most industrial areas, appreciated the benefits of industrialisation but were slow to recognise the drawbacks. Child labour was generally accepted as a necessary part of the new manufacturing sector. Generally speaking, the employment of children was not criticised because of the hardships inflicted upon them. More commonly, ministers were unhappy about the neglect of education. The Glasgow contributors to the [*Old*] *Statistical Account* indicated the means to alleviate the problem. Children should be sent to school at six years of age, and when they were recruited by manufacturers at seven or eight years they should attend Sunday schools: "the only method therefore, by which the education of the poor can be

7 *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow*, vii, 167-9.

8 *Scots Magazine*, February 1787, 99.

9 National Library of Scotland, 6.2470 (26), MS [Report of the] Society for Managing the Sunday Schools in Glasgow, during the year 1795.



secured is by giving it early, and supporting the Sunday Schools, which may prevent such education as they have from being lost".<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the Sunday school was regarded in its first 10 years of operation as an important extension of the educational system, particularly so in places where the parish-school system was inadequate for the peculiar needs of an emerging industrial society.

The second function of the Sunday school during its formative years was the reduction of lawlessness and Sabbath profanation. The rapid development of commerce and industry and the increase in population in the second half of the eighteenth century led to a decline in the standard of Sabbath observance. The legal system for enforcing observance of the Sabbath, employing official street patrols and "searchers" appointed by kirk sessions and civil authorities, fell into general disuse in the third quarter of the century as the level of Sabbath desecration became uncontrollable and as a number of Court of Session cases undermined the legality of criminal prosecutions. Glasgow magistrates became particularly concerned with the growth of profanation in the 1780s, and instituted voluntary patrols by the city's incorporated tradesmen in 1784.<sup>11</sup> To the same end, the Sunday schools founded in 1787 were intended to divert youths from raucous and even criminal behaviour on the Sabbath; in reflection of this, the first Sunday schools were known as the "Sabbath exercises". Robert Raikes explained how his opposition to "drunkenness and every species of clamour, riot, and disorder" brought strong financial support for his Sunday schools:<sup>12</sup>

"This may be accounted for from the security which the establishment of Sunday Schools has given to the property of every individual in the neighbourhood. The farmers, &c. declare that they and their families can now leave their houses, gardens, &c. and frequent the public worship, without danger of depredation. Formerly, they were under the necessity of leaving their servants, or staying at home themselves, as a guard; and this was insufficient; the most vigilant were sometimes plundered."

This was echoed by a Scottish Sunday-school society in 1813 when it claimed that great benefit resulted from "keeping the children from playing in the streets and fields on the Lord's Day, and committing depredations on people's property".<sup>13</sup>

The Sunday school was evidently popular as a contribution to

10 [Old] *Statistical Account*, v, 530.

11 Brackenridge, "Sunday Observance", 104-5.

12 Quoted in *Scots Magazine*, January 1787, 15-16.

13 *Report of the United Sabbath Day Schools of Glasgow and its Vicinity*, 1813, 6.

the suppression of Sabbath crime. On the first day of the Sabbath exercises in Glasgow, the scholars were led in "joyful procession" to divine service with the city magistrates, accompanied by multitudes "applauding the benevolent design". The fact that the youths were "in general so clean, and so decently dressed" and their behaviour in church was "decent and exemplary" gave hope to the city's propertied classes that Sunday disturbances would be reduced: "joy and thankfulness seemed to be written on every countenance".<sup>14</sup> In order to reduce Sabbath profanation effectively, the "exercises" lasted throughout most of the daylight hours and into the evening. In addition, scholars attended church services and, in Glasgow at least, special pews were set aside to accommodate them. The Aberdeen "exercises" lasted from 8 to 10 a.m., 1 to 2 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m.<sup>15</sup> With five hours of instruction from teachers and perhaps three to six hours of divine service, young people were kept off the streets and prevented from becoming, in the view of Sunday-school organisers, "useless or pernicious members of society".<sup>16</sup>

To most contemporary observers, the Sunday school was an innovative institution with great potential. It was actively promoted by the civil and religious authorities as a major part of their response to the changing social needs of industrialising Scotland. In many towns, Sunday schools were formed with the corporate assistance of town councils and magistrates' benches. As well as receiving the approbation of the civil establishment, the early Sunday-school movement enjoyed support from a broad spectrum of the divisions within the ecclesiastical establishment. In the late 1780s and early 1790s, moderates as well as evangelicals in the Church of Scotland assisted the movement. Indeed, the Glasgow scheme of 1787 was promoted principally by the Rev. William Porteous, a staunch member of the Moderate party. With the backing of evangelical clergymen as well, the movement became institutionalised very rapidly. Local subscription societies were set up to tap the wealth of the nascent urban middle classes for money with which to pay Sunday-school teachers. Organising committees included clergy, elders, magistrates and wealthy private citizens. In Glasgow, the Society for Managing the Sunday Schools became an incorporation of the city in 1790.<sup>17</sup> With this degree of official approval, the movement seemed set fair to expand and flourish.

Despite the initial breadth of support that Sunday schools attracted from within the Church of Scotland, it became apparent very soon that the movement was receiving its strongest support

<sup>14</sup> *Scots Magazine*, December 1787, 619.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, February 1787, 99.

<sup>16</sup> Renwick (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow*, viii, 388.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

from evangelicals. Hitherto, the evangelicals in the Established Church had been distinguished from moderates largely in terms of attitudes to patronage and, to a lesser extent, salvationist religion. The distinctive evangelical concern for missionary activity, voluntary effort and philanthropic liberality had not yet become established. These features of an evangelical movement were starting to emerge in the 1790s. At the same time, however, British hostility to the French Revolution, and to the popular campaigns for reform that were seen to arise in this country as a result of French influence, placed evangelicals in a position of great difficulty. The development of correspondence societies and the distribution of radical literature in 1791-2, followed by the treason trials of 1793 and the mounting fear of French invasion, produced an increasingly hysterical opposition on the part of the civil authorities to the promotion of "reform" of any kind and to the formation of private societies for whatever purposes. Just as evangelicals began to formulate policies for new religious activity, they found that their intentions became the object of suspicion, their proclamations were regarded as seditious, and their activities viewed as little short of treasonable. The ideal of universal education, for so long an integral part of Scottish presbyterian thinking, became regarded as subversive in the context of the counter-revolutionary frenzy of the 1790s.

Whilst the Scottish ecclesiastical establishment, dominated by the Moderate party, dissociated itself from anything connected with "reform", evangelicals within and outwith the Church of Scotland formulated policies to disseminate religious and general knowledge amongst the "lower orders of society" at home and "barbarous and heathen nations" abroad. Local societies were formed in Edinburgh and Glasgow in 1795, and in other towns in the following year, to promote foreign missions. Although the Edinburgh society was organised by the Congregationalist Greville Ewing, most societies were dominated by evangelical clergymen of the Established Church and were given support by magistrates and other local worthies.<sup>18</sup> With strong support in the burghs, the evangelicals sought the sanction of the General Assembly for a general collection in aid of these societies. The Assembly debate in 1796 was a notable contest between the evangelical and moderate factions. The missionary societies were branded as seditious by the moderates, with one elder stating "that their funds may be, in time, nay, certainly will be, turned against the

18 *Report of the directors to the General Annual Meeting of the Glasgow Missionary Society, 1796; Report of the Jubilee and Annual Meeting of the Glasgow Missionary Society, 1846*; Edinburgh University Library, Laing MSS, La.II.500, Circular of Edinburgh Missionary Society, 18 March 1796; D. Reeves, "The Interaction of Scottish and English Evangelicals, 1790-1810" (unpublished M.Litt. thesis, University of Glasgow, 1973), 23-75.



constitution".<sup>19</sup> By 58 votes to 44, the Assembly decided to deny the request and, by clear implication, to outlaw the missionary societies within the Church.

The development of Sunday schools in the late 1790s must be seen in the light of this decision. The Assembly's opposition, together with active discouragement by the national government, made foreign missions more difficult to mount. Most notably, the Haldane brothers with their ally Greville Ewing were thwarted in their attempt to establish a foreign-mission station in India. With the political and ecclesiastical establishments reaching a peak of counter-revolutionary frenzy in 1797, the Haldanes and other supporters of foreign missionary activity became the objects of suspicion for "licentiousness" and subversion. Principal George Hill of St Andrews University was one of a number of moderates who passed on information to the Lord Advocate concerning the activities of evangelicals.<sup>20</sup> As a result of this attention, there was a distinct switch of evangelical interest from foreign to home missions. This led to the second phase of Sunday-school expansion.

In 1797 the concept of *gratis* Sunday schools, with unpaid voluntary teachers, was imported from England. The first *gratis* schools were established in Edinburgh, probably by the Haldanes and Ewing, and in Glasgow by a textile manufacturer named William Harley.<sup>21</sup> The Haldanes extended their Sunday-school work throughout Scotland in 1798 under the aegis of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at Home (S.P.G.H.). With substantial funds, the S.P.G.H. sent itinerant preachers to many parts of Scotland, conducting open-air prayer meetings and founding day schools and Sunday schools as they went.<sup>22</sup> This activity very quickly attracted the disapprobation of moderate clergy. William Porteous, the founder of Glasgow's Sunday schools, supplied the Lord Advocate with accounts of the Haldanes' "subversive" work in the Glasgow area. Distinguishing the early Sabbath exercises from the new *gratis* schools, Porteous wrote in 1798:

"About ten years ago, the people here, and in many other places, created Sunday schools for keeping educated boys in

19 *Account of the Proceedings and Debate, in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 27 May 1796* (Edinburgh, 1796), 55.

20 Hill was particularly concerned with the activities of the Haldane brothers; see *ibid.* and Edinburgh University Library, Laing MSS, La.II.500, Hill to Lord Advocate (Robert Dundas), 2 March 1797.

21 *Sabbath School Union for Scotland, Third Annual Report, 1819*, 10, 23-45; *Edinburgh Gratis Sabbath School Society, Seventeenth Annual Report, 1814*; J. Galloway, *William Harley* . . . (Ardrossan, 1901), 10-14.

22 *An Account of the Proceedings of the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home* . . . (Edinburgh, 1799); Reeves, "Scottish and English Evangelicals", 89-135.

the practice of reading and repeating the catechism after public worship. Mr J. Haldane, in the beginning of last year, made a tour to visit the Sunday schools, the effects of which were soon visible. By his influence, he prevailed on some well meaning persons to open Sunday schools on a new plan. Old and young, men and women, boys and girls, were invited to attend, they did attend in their multitudes, and in place of our simple exercises, a loquacious manufacturer from Glasgow preached and prayed with vehemence till a late hour. . . ."

The open invitation to attend, the use of lay preachers and the holding of meetings after dark were regarded as sure signs of ecclesiastical and civil sedition. Porteous censured the promoters of the new schools for attacking "religious establishments" and for circulating pamphlets "calculated to produce discontent, to foster an aversion to the present order of things, and to increase that portentuous [*sic*] fermentation in the minds of the people. . . ." <sup>23</sup> The culmination of such opposition came in 1799 with the General Assembly's Pastoral Admonition against the S.P.G.H. The Society's Sunday-school teachers were described by the Admonition as "persons notoriously disaffected to the Civil Constitution of the country". Ministers and members of the Churches were forbidden to deal with the S.P.G.H. and, in a separate act, the Assembly requested that all presbyteries register Sunday and day schools within their bounds. <sup>24</sup>

With war-time tension reaching a pre-Napoleonic height in 1799, the Sunday-school movement was effectively proscribed in the Church of Scotland. Even evangelicals of the most patriotic kind became circumspect, refraining from publicising their sympathies with the Sunday-school movement. Generally speaking, only the Haldanes, Greville Ewing and their brethren, and visiting English preachers, openly denounced the Assembly's Admonition. The Scottish Church's reaction to *gratis* schools was more extreme than that of the Anglican Church, and caused surprise amongst English evangelicals. Rowland Hill commented sarcastically:

"... respecting the little army we were about to raise, to overthrow the king and constitution, it should be considered that the children in these *schools of sedition* are on the average only from six to twelve years of age, consequently they will not be able to take the field, at least these ten

23 Edinburgh University Library, Laing MSS, La.II.500, William Porteous to Lord Advocate, 21 February 1798.

24 *Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1794-1812*, 38-45.



years, and half of these being girls, unless we raise an army of Amazons, with a virago Joan at the head of them, we shall be sadly short of soldiers to accomplish the design."

Hill asked whether it was to the credit of the Assembly "that people are sent into banishment from Scotland, merely for keeping Sunday schools of instruction?"<sup>25</sup> Although that does not appear to have occurred, the effect of the Admonition was the exclusion of Sunday schools from the work of the Church of Scotland. Schools in many places were disbanded by parish ministers, and, although some clergy gave their personal and often covert support, the Church did not. Notwithstanding the thaw in the Established Church's attitude in the first and second decades of the nineteenth century, the level of Sunday-school operations in the Church was adversely affected for over 70 years. A number of the more adventurous evangelical ministers, such as Thomas Chalmers, did lend their support to the movement in the 1810s and 1820s. Nevertheless, with the exception of the late 1830s when the evangelicals gained control in the Assembly, the supreme court of the Church shunned Sunday schools until 1849 leaving the state church bereft of a major religious agency.<sup>26</sup>

Whilst the Established Church formally turned its back to the Sunday-school movement in 1799, the *gratis* schools started by the Haldanes grew in number and, by 1810, were being connected with congregations of the Baptist and Congregational denominations. Although much of the effort of the S.P.G.H. had been directed to the rural areas of Scotland, the greatest growth of the movement took place in the towns and industrial areas of central Scotland. The Independents were operating some 35 Sunday schools in Glasgow in 1800 with over 1,200 children in attendance. A society in Paisley was conducting 15 schools with a similar number of scholars as early as 1797, and by 1800 controlled 34 schools.<sup>27</sup>

Between 1800 and 1819, the Scottish movement was expanding at an accelerating rate. Sunday-school societies were appearing in many towns and villages throughout the country, but the greatest concentrations were in the Forth and Clyde valleys, Fife, and on the north-east coast between Dundee and Fraserburgh. Most schools were operated by district or interdenominational societies, but the greatest denominational contribution at this time was

25 R. Hill, *A Series of Letters occasioned by the late Pastoral Admonition of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1799), 23-4, 36.

26 *Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1876: Report on Sabbath Schools*, 522-528.

27 *Fourth Annual Report . . . of the Sabbath Evening Schools . . . [of the] Churches of Christ, assembling in Nile Street and Albion Street, Glasgow, 1813; Report of the present state of the Paisley Sabbath, and Weekday, Evening Schools, 1814.*

made by the Independents. Of 452 identifiable Sunday schools in a list compiled in 1819, 181 were conducted by district and/or interdenominational societies, 133 were run by Independents, 93 were conducted or "countenanced" by the parish minister, 17 were promoted wholly by titled gentry, nine each were run by the Burghers and the Methodists, three each by the Antiburghers and groups of tradesmen, and two each by factory owners and day schools; of the total, 28 schools were receiving corporate assistance from magistrates.<sup>28</sup> The interdenominational and district societies were generally composed of varying mixtures of Independents, Methodists and Seceders. In addition, many individuals conducted their own Sunday schools as private philanthropic enterprises; this was a practice that was associated particularly with lay evangelicals in the Church of Scotland. As the figures quoted above suggest, a very small proportion of ministers in the Established Church were willing to give their open approval to Sunday schools.

The ecclesiastical atmosphere remained charged as a consequence of the events of the 1790s. Although counter-revolutionary fervour in Britain subsided with the coming of Napoleon, Sunday-school societies felt compelled to state repeatedly their allegiance to the constitution. With the end of the war with France in 1814-5, the Sunday-school movement adopted a more open profile. "It is too much to expect", proclaimed one Glasgow society, "that any scheme of public benevolence and utility, should be begun and continued without having to contend with objectors". However, the society "challenged the strictest scrutiny into their objects and plans".<sup>29</sup> The active hostility of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities dissipated between 1815 and 1820, and Sunday-school societies attracted large amounts of financial and, more importantly, voluntary help. The number of schools multiplied between 1814 and 1818 using the inflow of charitable aid released with the dissolution of war charities. The growing strength of the movement in the 1810s was reflected in the connection that Sunday Schools created with the bible- and tract-publishing business — a link that was to become an important feature of Sunday-school work in the Victorian period.

To co-ordinate this and other aspects of the movement's activities, regional Sunday-school unions, to which individual societies were affiliated, were established at this time — the two major unions being in Edinburgh (founded 1814) and Glasgow (1816). In addition, a national union was set up in 1816 to provide co-ordination to the movement in Scotland. By 1819, the

28 Data abstracted from *Sabbath School Union for Scotland, Third Annual Report*, 1819.

29 *Report of the United Sabbath Day Schools of Glasgow* . . . 1813, 5-6.

Sabbath School Union for Scotland claimed the affiliation of 567 schools with an aggregate attendance of 39,000 scholars. The Glasgow union alone claimed a Sunday school roll of nearly 9,000 in 1819, representing almost 7 per cent of the city's total population.

Although statistics were not collected before 1817, it seems that Sunday-school enrolment only reached a significant level after 1814. Data on the formation of Sunday-school societies supports this view. Of 52 societies in existence in 1819 whose origins were recorded by the national union, three were founded before 1800, four between 1800 and 1806, eight between 1807 and 1813, 14 in 1814-16 and 24 in 1817-18.<sup>30</sup> Although a small number of schools with paid teachers survived into the 1820s, the rapid increase in the number of *gratis* schools after the cessation of the Anglo-French war established voluntary teaching as a central principle of the movement and established the dissenters as the leaders of the movement.

Between 1820 and 1837, the fortunes of the movement have not been well recorded. This is largely because the regional and national organising unions that were set up in the 1810s seem to have been dissolved about 1820. The collapse of the unions, in itself, may have been an indication of problems. In particular, many Sunday-school societies appear to have collapsed as their interdenominational organising committees were divided by doctrinal disagreements compounded by the Voluntary controversy of the 1830s.<sup>31</sup> In any event, when the Glasgow union was temporarily reformed in 1828-9, its Sunday-school roll was lower than it had been in 1818. The Glasgow union was permanently re-established in 1837, and the Scottish union at about the same time. From then until the last decade of the century, the Scottish movement grew enormously. The figures collected by the Glasgow union, which are the most detailed and extensive available, show a rise in enrolment from 13,000 in 1837 to 25,000 in 1842. Over the decade 1831 to 1841, the estimated growth of the movement in Glasgow was more than four times the rate of population growth.<sup>32</sup>

It is significant that this rapid increase occurred at the same time as the "Ten Years' Conflict" in the Established Church. The evidence suggests that all evangelical enterprises expanded spectacularly after the Evangelical party gained control of the General Assembly in 1834. In the following 10 years, evangelical

30 *Sabbath School Union for Scotland, Third Annual Report*, 1819, 23-45; *Glasgow Sabbath School Union, Report*, 1818, 16.

31 For a report of difficulties of this kind in Greenock, see J. Dunlop, *Autobiography* (London, 1932, privately printed), 53-7.

32 Calculated from data in *Glasgow Sabbath School Union, Annual Report*, 1841, 28.



activities — including Sunday schools — lost their close identification with the dissenters as evangelicals in the Church of Scotland formed church extension societies, tract societies, foreign mission organisations and Sunday schools. Whilst some of the dissenting churches were finding their Sunday schools poorly supported by their members,<sup>33</sup> the evangelicals in the Established Church were starting to dominate regional unions and lead the movement in Scotland.

The growing strength and importance of British evangelicalism and its various enterprises in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries have been emphasised by a number of recent historians.<sup>34</sup> In so doing, the position of influence that the evangelical movement attained after 1850 has been somewhat neglected. The quantitative evidence relating to evangelical enterprises, and to Sunday schools in particular, indicates quite clearly that there was exceptionally high growth in their size and outreach between 1840 and 1880. The creation of the Free Church in 1843 and the United Presbyterian Church in 1847 led to a period of rapid increase in the numbers of scholars enrolled in Scottish Sunday schools.

Table 1 shows that growth in enrolment in the Sunday schools attached to the three main presbyterian churches was between two and four times higher than population growth between 1851 and 1881. Table 2, referring to Glasgow, shows the same pattern. Both sets of figures show that growth in enrolment was overtaken by population growth in the 1890s. Furthermore, with the exception of the 1940s, Scottish Sunday-school enrolment has been in absolute decline from the 1890s to the present day. The highest level of enrolment *per capita* was reached around 1890. In Glasgow in 1891, enrolled scholars accounted for 14.13 per cent of the city's total population, or about 60 per cent of the children aged between 5 and 14 years inclusive. With the average number of attendances representing about 75 per cent of enrolment, approximately 46 per cent of Glasgow children in the eligible age group were attending a Sunday school on any Sunday in 1891. With similar and perhaps slightly higher figures in Scotland as a whole, Sunday-school membership about 1890 reached a high level of saturation.

This spectacular rise in the quantitative importance of Sunday schools in the second half of the nineteenth century was accompanied by major qualitative changes in the nature of Sunday-

33 *Address on Sabbath Schools to the Presbyteries and Sessions of the United Secession Church. By Committee of Synod* (n.d., c. 1840).

34 On the topic of Sunday-school history, see Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability*; for a study of Evangelicals in the Church of England with the same emphasis on the pre-1850 period, see I. Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness: The Evangelical Impact on the Victorians* (London, 1976).

school teaching and management, and changes in the movement's aims and in its clientele. Most important was the general acceptance of the movement. With the formation of the Free Church in 1843, Sunday schools received the official backing of a major presbyterian church. The political and ecclesiastical opposition to Sunday schools was practically ended. Free Church Sunday-school promoters gave thanks "that the time is past when it was needful to defend these honoured institutions".<sup>35</sup> Only the "paradoxical and lukewarm" remained hostile.<sup>36</sup>

The acceptance of Sunday schools in the dissenting presbyterian denominations led to a number of changes. In the first place, Sunday schools became attached to individual congregations. This permitted the use of churches, mission churches and, from the 1870s onwards, church halls in which to conduct Sunday-school meetings; formerly, the majority of meetings had been held in hired halls or day schools. Secondly, the establishment of day schools by the Free and United Presbyterian Churches, and the release of children from full-time industrial work consequent upon the passing of the Factory Acts of the 1840s, obviated the need for teaching reading and writing in the Sunday schools. The increasingly strict observance of Sabbatarian principles had led, as early as the 1820s, to a virtual proscription of general education on Sundays. Special "week-day evening Sabbath schools" had been set up in the larger towns to provide reading and writing exercises.<sup>37</sup> But the need for these declined with the expansion of urban day schools.

The proportion of illiterates (defined as those unable to read the New Testament) in Glasgow Sunday schools fell from 18.3 per cent in 1850 to 5.8 per cent in 1870.<sup>38</sup> By 1865, the Glasgow Sabbath School Union claimed that there was not a single affiliated Sunday school providing reading and writing lessons at normal meetings.<sup>39</sup> Between 1820 and 1870, Sunday schools gradually lost their rôle as educational establishments and became more rigorously religious institutions. With the creation of Sunday-school committees in the General Assemblies of the Free Church (committee formed in 1844) and the Church of Scotland (committee formed in 1850, though with little influence until 1876), and in the Synod of the U.P. Church (committee formed in

35 *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1845*, Report of the [Education] Sub-committee on Sabbath Schools, 236.

36 *Address on Sabbath Schools . . . [by] the United Secession Church*, 2-3.

37 Dunlop, *Autobiography*, 53-7; *Glasgow Sabbath School Union, Annual Report*, 1840, 7.

38 Figures calculated from *Glasgow Sabbath School Union, Annual Report*, 1850, 17; 1870, 15.

39 National Library of Scotland, 6147 (ii), MS minutes of Board of the Glasgow Sabbath School Union, 23 September 1865.

1847), the movement became more clearly a part of the ecclesiastical system.<sup>40</sup>

With the “denominationalisation” of Sunday schools in mid-century, practically all of the independent Sunday-school societies disappeared. The local and regional unions, however, did not disappear. They developed rapidly as interdenominational organisations with enormous influence within and outwith the churches. The unions published journals and tracts for scholars and teaching aids for teachers. They organised instruction courses for teachers and in the 1840s and 1850s set up “Sabbath normal schools” in imitation of the churches’ teacher training colleges. More significantly, the unions provided the Sunday-school movement with an extraordinary degree of political influence. Virtually impotent in both civil and ecclesiastical affairs in 1840, the unions had become powerful pressure groups in local and national politics by the 1850s.

The Glasgow union, the largest and most powerful in Scotland with affiliations from practically all the Sunday schools in Glasgow, yielded considerable influence in local politics. Its directorate included the lord provost, members of parliament and many of the members of the town council. Perhaps its most impressive achievement was in orchestrating a campaign which, in 1850, forced the Corporation to impose strict licensing regulations on public houses — regulations that became the model for the Scottish national Forbes Mackenzie Act of 1853.<sup>41</sup>

More generally, the officers of the local unions became major figures in social-reform affairs. By the 1860s, they were occupying senior posts in national and local charities, were on many of the committees of the church assemblies, and, after 1873, held seats on the local school boards. Indeed, being a Sunday-school teacher was a key qualification for presbyterian candidates at school-board elections in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The influence of the union officers was not merely in recognition of their good services. It reflected their experience and knowledge of education, and also the political and social power that lay in their organisations. The Glasgow union, for instance, represented 105,000 scholars and over 10,000 teachers by 1890. Outside of the churches themselves, it is doubtful if there was any voluntary organisation that could claim a local membership of those proportions.

40 *Proceedings of the Free Church of Scotland, 1844. Report of Education Committee*, 61-3; *Proceedings of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, October 1847*, 77; *Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1876*, 519.

41 *Scottish National Sabbath School Union, Annual Report, 1905*, 21; *Glasgow Herald*, 26 April 1850; Strathclyde Regional Archives, c.1.1.65, MS minutes of Glasgow Town Council, 7 and 28 March, and 25 April 1850.



The 20 years between 1870 and 1890 were probably the high point of the Sunday-school movement in Scotland. With the creation of the national day-school system in 1873, the churches put renewed faith in the ability of Sunday schools to maintain religious education amongst young people. Even the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which by its own admittance had been niggardly in its support of Sunday schools, urged that more of them be set up to counteract "the new method of instruction in Public Schools [which] is clearly unfavourable to any adequate attention being paid to the communication of religious knowledge".<sup>42</sup> For their part, the officers and members of the school boards were aware of the shortcomings of the religious education they provided, and were keen to maintain a strong Sunday-school movement. One school-board clerk told a Sunday-school conference in 1890:<sup>43</sup>

"The day school instruction can never supersede that of the Sabbath. Both are urgently required. . . . The day school furnishes the scholar with facts and doctrines, and, it is to be hoped, with becoming reverence for things Divine. It is for the Sabbath school teacher, working from that basis, to deal with the heart and conscience of the individual."

In one sense, the election of Sunday-school promoters to membership of the school boards gave the movement greater status and public recognition. In another sense, however, it marked a stage in the decline of the movement's position in the educational sector. Sunday-school teachers had been the most numerous, and arguably the most influential, educators and educationists in the country. They had spearheaded the task of providing educational training for the working classes and the poor. With the creation of the public education system in 1873, Sunday-school leaders transferred the onus for this task to day-school teachers. The Sunday-school teachers who were elected to school boards became educational administrators with the duty of tackling educational destitution whilst handling the often conflicting interests of pupils, teachers, ratepayers, the Scotch Education Department and the churches.

The low priority given to religious instruction in the public schools became a major point of criticism for Sunday-school teachers and protestant clergy. Repeated attempts were made by the education and Sunday-school committees of the presbyterian assemblies between 1875 and 1914 to improve religious instruction in day schools. The churches failed, and, to their dismay, were

<sup>42</sup> *Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1877, Report on Sabbath Schools*, 682.

<sup>43</sup> *Proceedings of the Twenty-third Scottish National Sabbath School Convention*, 1890, 29.

told by their own laymen and ministers on the school boards to stop interfering.<sup>44</sup> Whilst the Sunday-school movement's concern to improve "secular" education was successfully transferred to the public system, its concern for religious education was not. More importantly, the movement was slow to appreciate just how stark the division of interests was between voluntary and national education after the institution of the school boards in 1873.

Changes within the voluntary education sector after 1870 had even more profound effects on the Sunday school. The fact that the Sunday school was the first major religious voluntary organisation to come into being gave the movement a central position in the development of Victorian religious and educational institutions. It has already been noted that Sunday schools were establishing evening classes in the early nineteenth century. In many instances, day schools were set up following "aggressive visitations" undertaken by Sunday-school teachers in working-class areas of large towns.<sup>45</sup> A large number of other activities arose from Sunday-school operations. In the late 1840s, Sunday-school teachers sought to prevent older working-class children from becoming embroiled in criminal activities or, worse, in radical politics. Bible classes, fellowship meetings, young men's and women's institutes, mutual improvement societies, penny banks and libraries sprang from the home mission work of Sunday schools in the middle of the century.<sup>46</sup> In some cases, the regional Sunday-school unions nurtured these infant organisations during the 1850s and 1860s until the rapid and self-sustained growth of voluntary education in the last quarter of the century.

The total abstinence movement, embraced in the 1840s by the Sunday-school movement before the main presbyterian churches, gave rise to the Bands of Hope. The Bands grew most rapidly as congregational organisations after the Moody-Sankey revival of 1873-4. The Bands were most often organised by, or in co-operation with, Sunday-school teachers — in some cases using the Sunday schools for recruiting.<sup>47</sup> The Sunday school provided the

44 See for instance *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland, 1901*, 68.

45 An account of the "aggressive" system of recruitment, first popularised by Chalmers in the St John's experiment, is given in R. Buchanan, *The schoolmaster in the wynds: or, how to educate the masses* (Glasgow and Edinburgh, 1850).

46 *Glasgow Sabbath School Union, Annual Report, 1860*, 11; T. Henderson, *The Savings Bank of Glasgow: One Hundred Years of Thrift* (Glasgow, 1936), 38-9.

47 Glasgow University Archives, MS minutes of the Scottish Temperance League, 4 March and 16 September 1873; M. Dods *et al.*, *The Sunday School and its Relations* (London, 1896), 53; see also L. L. Shiman, "The Band of Hope Movement: Respectable Recreation for Working-class Children", *Victorian Studies*, xvi, (1973), 49-74.

model for youth organisations such as the Glasgow Foundry Boys Association and the Boys Brigade.<sup>48</sup> There was a high level of co-operation among the youth organisations in the promotion of joint enterprises and in the exchange of speakers in specialised subjects. In Glasgow for example, the Sunday-school union, the Foundry Boys, the Bands of Hope and the Glasgow United Evangelistic Association conducted joint mass demonstrations and services, "Children's Sabbath Dinners", day refuges and the "Fresh Air Fortnight" scheme.<sup>49</sup> The large army of Sunday-school teachers — two-thirds of them male in the 1850s but a majority female by the 1890s — formed a force which, more than any other group, crafted the voluntary educational institutions of modern Scotland.

With the improvement in day-school provision after 1850, and with the growth of youth movements like the Boys Brigade and the Band of Hope that catered particularly for working-class children, there was a distinct change in the social composition of Sunday-school classes. In the first half of the nineteenth century, scholars had been almost exclusively the children of working-class parents. In the 1840s, the evangelical churches were concerned that congregational Sunday schools included "nothing more than a mere fraction of the children of church members".<sup>50</sup> By the 1880s, scholars were predominantly middle class, and particularly lower-middle or artisan class; there were reportedly very few children from the "upper classes".<sup>51</sup> The increase in the social exclusivity of Sunday schools was assisted by the removal of some schools from mission churches and hired halls in working-class areas into purpose-built church halls erected beside congregational churches.<sup>52</sup> In addition, recruitment was adversely affected by the times of Sunday-school meetings. Most schools met before dawn or after dark, according to one commentator. As well as reducing attendance by children of non-church members, it

48 J. Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940* (London, 1977), 22-6.

49 *Glasgow Sabbath School Union, Annual Reports*, 1875, 8; 1880, 10; 1895, 12. So close was the relationship between the Glasgow Sabbath School Union, the Foundry Boys and the Young Men's Society for Religious Improvement that an amalgamation was proposed in 1871; National Library of Scotland, 6147 (ii), MS minutes of Board of the Glasgow Sabbath School Union, 21 August 1871.

50 *Address on Sabbath Schools . . . [by] the United Secession Church*, 5; *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1845*, 178; *Reports to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1851*, Report on Sabbath Schools, 20-3.

51 *Glasgow Sabbath School Association in Connection with the Church of Scotland, Annual Report*, 1895, 13; *Proceedings of the Twenty-third Scottish National Sabbath School Convention*, 1890, 25-6; *Falkirk Mail*, 6 October 1888.

52 *Glasgow Sabbath School Association . . . , Report*, 1890, 12.



proved detrimental to church attendance by Sunday-school pupils and, by implication, to church recruitment.<sup>53</sup>

These problems, together with a growing shortage of trained day-school teachers in Sunday schools, were being widely discussed within the movement in the late 1880s and 1890s. Although Sunday schools reached their highest *per capita* recruitment around 1890, the movement's leaders sensed that there were social changes under way that were soon to militate against continued expansion. On the one hand, the rise of the labour movement eclipsed the influence of evangelicalism in social-reform and political affairs: religious solutions to social ills were replaced by collectivist state solutions. On the other hand, recruitment to religious organisations was adversely affected by the growth of "secular" pastimes. Commercial entertainment, such as football and music halls, entered into a competitive relationship with voluntary organisations. Organisations like the Boys Brigade, the Boy Scouts and the Bands of Hope — with their varied and interesting curricula — were able to compete well and to flourish.<sup>54</sup>

Whilst Sunday schools looked favourably upon other organisations mounting scientific lectures, juvenile football leagues and military drill, Sabbatarian principles forbade such activities at normal Sunday meetings. Attempts had been made since the middle of the century to enliven the content of Sunday classes. Biblical and missionary geography had been introduced in the 1850s, and some of the more adventurous Sunday schools were teaching subjects like anatomy, British history and local history.<sup>55</sup> However, the essential nature of the Sunday school was religious and devotional. The basic inability to mount "secular" pursuits on the Sabbath proved damaging to the recruitment of children, especially those of working-class parents. The increased availability from the 1880s of both commercial entertainments and voluntary activities necessarily led to a decline in the Sunday school's rôle of servicing the leisure needs of young people at large.

53 *Proceedings of the Twenty-third Scottish National Sabbath School Convention*, 1890, 31, 36; *Glasgow Sabbath School Union, Annual Report*, 1875, 8.

54 Affiliations to the Scottish Band of Hope Union rose from 209 societies in 1880 to over 700 societies with 147,000 members in 1908. U.K. membership of the Boys' Brigade grew from 16,752 in 1890 to 68,089 in 1910; *Scottish Band of Hope Union, Annual Report*, 1908, 11-12; Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, 27, 138.

55 In 1850, one U.P. Sunday school felt compelled to justify the introduction of "secular" subjects in its curriculum as follows: "We wish to recognise the principle that science is the handmaiden of religion, and that godliness is like to be promoted by a knowledge of the works and way of God". Quoted in *Glasgow Sabbath School Union, Annual Report*, 1849, 21-2.

As table 3 indicates, the Sunday-school decline was steeper in the evangelical dissenting denominations than in the Church of Scotland. This was symptomatic of a general crisis amongst evangelical voluntary organisations between 1890 and 1914.<sup>56</sup> The union of the Free and U.P. churches in 1900 can be seen as one response. The formation in 1899 of the Scottish National Sabbath School Union, combining most of the local unions but based on the Glasgow union, was another response. The national union was reorganised in 1925 as the Scottish Sunday School Union for Christian Education with, for the first time, official representatives from the protestant churches. Ecumenism and organisational amalgamation in the Sunday-school movement followed closely the same trends in the presbyterian churches. In neither sphere did these developments solve the essential problem of declining recruitment rates.<sup>57</sup>

In its 200 years, the Scottish Sunday school has undertaken many tasks. The education of children of working-class parents was a major responsibility in its early years. Whilst many Sunday schools in England and Wales continued to provide general education until quite late in the nineteenth century, Sabbatarian strictures forced Sunday schools in Scotland to organise special weekday classes for this purpose. The opening of more urban day schools after mid-century, and the advent of compulsory education in the 1870s, relieved Sunday schools of this duty. At the same time, Sunday scholars were recruited in greater numbers from the middle classes; the missionary Sunday schools became quite distinct and less numerous. As a consequence, the churches took a greater interest in Sunday schools as agencies for recruiting church members.<sup>58</sup> The accommodation was improved by the construction of church halls from the 1870s onwards.

In other respects, Sunday schools became more attractive to middle-class children. They lost their function as a means of exerting some measure of influence amongst the turbulent and often violent working classes. After 1850, the Sunday school became less missionary and more congregational in character. It became the central voluntary organisation in the growing community of congregational agencies. By the late nineteenth century, it was no longer regarded as the "front line" between middle and working classes, but as an augmentation of day-

56 For a revealing local study (of Reading), see S. Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (London, 1976).

57 The nature of "secularisation" and the contribution of religious voluntary organisations to "the social significance of religion" in Scotland are themes in the present author's forthcoming doctoral thesis.

58 The role of Sunday schools in church recruitment is considered in R. Currie, A. Gilbert and L. Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977), 84-90, 122.

school and family education. "In an ideal home-life", wrote one minister in 1896, "the Sunday school would be a superfluity, if not an impertinence. . . ."<sup>59</sup> The inadequate provision for children in industrial society had led to the development of the Sunday school as the first major organised leisure pursuit for the young. The expansion and diversification of children's pastimes, with the emergence of competing "secular" activities after 1870, led inevitably to the decline in devotional and pedagogic leisure and to the falling popularity of the Sunday school.

It has only been possible to provide a brief survey of Scottish Sunday-school history in this paper. Many aspects of the Sunday school remain to be studied: for instance, its rôle in religious revivalism; its employment as a "missionary" agency amongst Roman Catholic children; and the rôle of Sunday-school teachers in the development of teaching materials and methods (such as mixed-ability and open-class teaching). More contentious issues can be debated: for example, the extent to which the Sunday school was an agency for imposing middle-class "control" on the working classes, or for disseminating middle-class values throughout society.<sup>60</sup> There is ample scope for further research to be undertaken before the true bicentenary of the Sunday-school movement in Scotland in 1987.

59 Dods, *The Sunday School*, 21.

60 See for instance Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability*, and E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1963), especially 411-16.



# APPENDIX

Table 1:  
Sunday-school and population growth in Scotland, 1851-1970

Date	Scholars at Scottish <sup>1</sup> Sunday schools		Scottish population		Sunday-school growth above or below population growth %
	Roll	Decennial growth %	Population (thousands)	Decennial growth %	
1851	240,745 <sup>2</sup>		2,889		
1861	299,776 <sup>3</sup>	24.52	3,062	5.99	+ 18.53
1871	356,255 <sup>3</sup>	18.84	3,360	9.73	+ 9.11
1881	429,811	20.65	3,736	11.19	+ 9.46
1891	487,365	13.39	4,026	7.76	+ 5.63
1901	467,479	— 4.08	4,472	11.08	—15.16
1911	466,896	— 0.12	4,761	6.46	— 6.58
1921	392,405	—15.95	4,882	2.54	—18.49
1931	376,760	— 3.99	4,843	— 0.8	— 3.19
1941	237,999	—36.83	5,022 <sup>7</sup>	3.7	—40.53
1951	300,008	26.05	5,096	1.47	+ 24.58
1961	288,560 <sup>4</sup>	— 3.82	5,179	1.63	— 5.45
1970	225,746 <sup>5</sup>	—24.19 <sup>6</sup>	5,223 <sup>8</sup>	0.95 <sup>9</sup>	—25.14

## Sources:

Figures for Scottish Sunday-school roll are taken from and derived from R. Currie, A. Gilbert and L. Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977), 169-70, 172-4; and *Census of Great Britain 1851: Report of Religious Worship and Education, Scotland* (London, 1854), 37. Figures for Scottish population are from B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1962), 6; and B. R. Mitchell and H. G. Jones, *Second Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1971), 3.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> The figures relate to Sunday-school pupils enrolled at Sunday schools attached to the Church of Scotland, the Free Church (1851-91), United Presbyterian Church (1851-91) and United Free Church (1901-70). The component figures on which the totals above are based relate to the rolls recorded by each denomination except where indicated below.

<sup>2</sup> Only the Free Church recorded a figure (99,090) for this year. It was 8.5% greater than the figure (91,328) for scholars enrolled at Free Church Sunday schools recorded at the 1851 religious census. Figures for the other churches were calculated by taking 108.5% of the 1851 census returns. Thus, the Church of Scotland census return of 76,233 enrolled scholars produced a figure of 82,713, and the U.P. Church census return of 54,324 produced a figure of 58,942.

<sup>3</sup> The Free Church figure for 1861 (109,113) is an estimate provided by Currie *et al.*, *Churches and Churchgoers*, 172. The Church of Scotland figures for 1861 (119,028) and 1871 (155,343) are estimates calculated by linear extrapolation from the 1851 estimate (82,713; see note 2 above) and the 1881 actual figure (191,657).

<sup>4</sup> The Church of Scotland figure (281,561) was derived by linear extrapolation from the figures for 1959 (297,192) and 1962 (273,746).

- <sup>5</sup> The United Free Church figure (4,873) is an estimate calculated on the basis that the negative growth in the United Free Church roll of Sunday-school pupils was from 1967 (when the roll stood at 5,538) until 1970 at the same rate as the decline in the Church of Scotland roll between the same dates (*i.e.* at -12%).
- <sup>6</sup> This figure is decennial equivalent. The true rate of growth from 1961-70 was -21.77%.
- <sup>7</sup> This figure was calculated by linear extrapolation from 1939 mid-year estimate and 1951 census return.
- <sup>8</sup> This figure was calculated by linear extrapolation from the figures for 1961 and 1971 (5,228,000).
- <sup>9</sup> This figure relates to decennial growth 1961-71.

Table 2:  
Sunday-school and population growth in Glasgow, 1840-1916

Date	Scholars at Glasgow <sup>1</sup> Sunday schools		Glasgow population <sup>6</sup>		Sunday-school growth above or below population growth %
	Roll	Decennial growth %	Population (thousands)	Decennial growth %	
1831	9,789 <sup>2</sup>		212		
1841	23,830 <sup>2</sup>	143.44 <sup>2</sup>	287	35.38	+ 108.06 <sup>2</sup>
1851	38,704	62.42	363	26.48	+ 35.94
1861	58,021	49.91	443	22.04	+ 27.87
1871	68,897	18.74 <sup>3</sup>	568	28.22	- 9.48 <sup>3</sup>
1881	87,683	27.56	673	18.49	+ 9.07
1891	108,205	23.40	766	13.82	+ 9.58
1901	115,254 <sup>4</sup>	6.51	904	18.02	- 11.51
1911	110,472 <sup>4</sup>	- 4.15	954	5.53	- 9.68
1916	97,702 <sup>4</sup>	-23.12 <sup>5</sup>	994 <sup>7</sup>	8.39 <sup>8</sup>	- 31.51

*Sources:*

Figures for scholars enrolled at Glasgow Sunday schools are from *Glasgow Sabbath School Union, Annual Reports*, 1841, 1842, 1853, 1862, 1872, 1882, 1892; and *Scottish National Sabbath School Union, Annual Reports*, 1902, 1912, 1917. Figures for Glasgow population are taken from B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1962), 24-5.

*Notes:*

- <sup>1</sup> The figures include all the pupils enrolled at Sunday schools in Glasgow and suburbs, with only a very small number of excluded schools (notably some attached to the Evangelical Union). The figures also include some schools outwith Glasgow and suburbs, notably Rutherglen and Cambuslang. However, over 95% of the enrolled scholars attended Sunday schools located within the area encompassed by the population statistics.
- <sup>2</sup> The 1831 figure was derived by linear extrapolation from the figures for 1829 (8,768) and 1837 (12,852). There was undoubtedly a very rapid growth in the Sunday-school movement in the city in the 1830s, but the figures are exaggerated by affiliation of already operating schools to the Glasgow Sabbath School Union.
- <sup>3</sup> Whilst there was a drop in the growth of enrolment during the 1860s, the level of enrolment in 1871 was particularly low. The decennial growth rate of 18.74% for 1861-71 can be compared to the rate of 25.30% for 1860-70.

- <sup>4</sup> In 1899, the Glasgow Sabbath School Union became the main component of the Scottish National Sabbath School Union. The enrolment figures continued to be collected in the same manner and referred to the same areas as formerly.
- <sup>5</sup> This figure is decennial equivalent. The true rate of growth for 1911-16 was -11.56%.
- <sup>6</sup> Population figures refer to Glasgow and environs of Glasgow later incorporated in the city. Such environs include Partick, Hillhead, Govan, Calton and Kinning Park which were all separate from Glasgow in 1831 and all part of it by 1916.
- <sup>7</sup> This figure was calculated by linear extrapolation from the census figures for 1911 and 1921 (1,034,000).
- <sup>8</sup> This figure refers to decennial growth in population between 1911 and 1921.

Table 3:  
Sunday-school growth in Scotland, 1860-1970: the Established  
and dissenting presbyterian churches compared

Date	Church of Scotland		Free Church + U.P. Church (1860-1890) United Free Church (1900-1929)	
	Roll	Decennial growth %	Roll <sup>3</sup>	Decennial growth %
1860	—		177,034	
1870	—		199,504	12.69
1880	187,418		239,652	20.12
1890	217,207	15.89	269,176	12.32
1900	222,944	2.64	235,724	-11.72 <sup>4</sup>
1910	234,980	5.4	240,619	2.08
1920	193,616	-17.60	197,602	-17.88
1930	355,018	- 7.62 <sup>5</sup>		
1940	244,494	-31.13		
1950	281,108	14.98		
1960	289,377 <sup>1</sup>	2.94		
1970	220,873	-23.67		

*Source:*

Figures for Sunday-school rolls are from, or derived from, R. Currie *et al.*, *Churches and Churchgoers*, 169-173.

*Notes:*

<sup>1</sup> This figure was calculated by linear extrapolation from the figures for 1959 (297,192) and 1962 (273,746).

<sup>2</sup> This figure represents the decennial growth rate from the aggregate roll of the United Free Church and the Church of Scotland in 1920 (391,218) to the aggregate roll of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church Continuing (whose roll stood at 6,379) in 1930 (361,397).

<sup>3</sup> The component figures for the period 1860 to 1890 are as follows:



Year	Free Church roll	United Presbyterian Church roll
1860	108,539	68,495
1870	117,064	82,440
1880	155,212	84,440
1890	166,166	103,010

The figure for the Free Church roll in 1860 was calculated by linear extrapolation from the figure for 1852 (103,945) and an estimate for 1861 (109,113).

- \* This figure represents the decennial growth rate from the aggregate Sunday-school roll of the Free Church and the U.P. Church in 1890 to the aggregate roll of the United Free Church and the Free Church (whose roll was estimated at 1,909) in 1900 (237,633). The Free Church estimate for 1900 represents 0.81% of the United Free Church roll at that date. This was done on the basis that in 1900 the Free Church roll of communicants (4,008) represented 0.81% of the United Free Church roll of communicants, and that the ratio of enrolled Sunday-school scholars to enrolled communicants was the same in both churches.